

**Commissioner's Weekly Field Memo**  
**Friday, January 15, 2016**

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## Notes from Commissioner Wagner

### **1. Bone-marrow drive scheduled to support Newport School Department employees**

We have received the disturbing news that two employees of the Newport School Department have been diagnosed with a bone-marrow disease and are in urgent need of a bone-marrow transplant. Their friends and colleagues have organized a bone-marrow drive, which will take place on Monday, January 25, from 3:30 to 7:30 p.m., at the Pell Elementary School, 35 Dexter St., Newport. Anyone between the ages of 18 and 44 can participate; signing up involves only a quick swab of the cheek. Please consider participating to show your support for their recovery.

### **2. Working Group approves funding formula recommendations**

Last night the Funding Formula Working Group approved a set of recommendations regarding potential revisions to the funding formula for education aid; the group will send its

recommendations to Governor Raimondo for her consideration and action. Highlights of the recommendations include:

- consider providing additional support for English Language Learners;
- consider providing additional support for districts with high-cost special education students;
- review the current approach to managing career & technical education and the current methods for calculating career & technical education tuition and reimbursement;
- adjust the funding formula to account for differences in expenses between traditional districts and charter public schools;
- consider providing additional support to traditional districts with high percentages of students enrolled in charters and state-operated schools;
- strengthen the funding formula maintenance-of-effort language to account for inflation and enrollment increases; and
- review the funding formula at standard intervals to ensure that it is performing as intended.

The group has done an excellent job in meeting its criteria for success, that is, developing recommendations that are equitable, fair, and driven by data. These recommendations can lead to a major improvements in our student-centered investments in public education. Thanks to Superintendents Patti DiCenso and Georgia Fortunato and to heads of school Victoria Gailliard-Garrick and Julie Nora for their participation as members of this working group, which Governor Raimondo convened three months ago.

### **3. Middle-school students honored for healthy recipes**

Last week, Governor Raimondo and First Gentleman Moffit, in partnership with the Rhode Island Community Food Bank and Eat Drink RI, hosted a luncheon to recognize the winners of the RI Kids' Healthy Recipe Challenge. The meal was based on recipes that Rhode Island children in grades 5 through 8 submitted to the Governor's Office. Congratulations to the students who submitted the winning recipes: Sofia Sweet, of the Fishing Cove Elementary School (North Kingstown); Cameron Belisle, of the Stone Hill Elementary School (Cranston); and Lily Addonizio, of the Immaculate Conception Catholic Regional School.

### **4. RIDE, NBC10, Hasbro partner on Golden Apple awards**

One of the ways in which we recognize some of the great educators in our schools is through the weekly presentation of Golden Apple awards. Our partners in the Golden Apple initiative are NBC10 and Hasbro, and we truly appreciate their support for Rhode Island teachers. If you're unfamiliar with the Golden Apple awards, check out the latest NBC10 feature: our awards presentation to Joanne Phillips, a science teacher at Lincoln High School:

<http://turnto10.com/station/golden-apple/golden-apple-joanne-phillips>

To nominate an educator for a Golden Apple award, see:

<http://turnto10.com/station/golden-apple/submit-golden-apple-nomination>

**From RIDE**

***Standards:***

**5. *Reminder:* RIDE offers scholarships for Winter Standards Institute on Common Core, January 22 deadline**

The Achievement Network will be offering a Winter Standards Institute on the Common Core standards February 17 through the 20. The institute is an opportunity for a community of practitioners to think deeply about their work, get smarter about research and materials, and confront the challenges of meeting high standards with all students. The institute will provide intensive, content-based learning experiences for teachers and leaders in multiple grade bands in one of three pathways: mathematics, English Language Arts/literacy, and Leadership.

We are offering scholarships to cover the registration costs, (\$1,600) for approximately 25 educators to attend. LEAs and educators will be responsible for travel and lodging costs associated for the travel to Boston. The address, [www.standardsinstitutes.org](http://www.standardsinstitutes.org) will connect you with more information on this institute to help inform your decision to participate.

The short application will require quick turnaround so that we can make decisions in time for you to register by February 12. We will prioritize providing scholarships to those educators who are prepared to share the learning and lead instruction within their school or district. Please complete the [Winter Standards Institute Scholarship Application](#) and return it no later than **January 22** to [melissa.cabralbraga@ride.ri.gov](mailto:melissa.cabralbraga@ride.ri.gov). Successful applicants will be notified no later than January 29.

Contact Phyllis Lynch ([phyllis.lynch@ride.ri.gov](mailto:phyllis.lynch@ride.ri.gov)) or Mary Ann Snider ([maryann.snider@ride.ri.gov](mailto:maryann.snider@ride.ri.gov)) if you have any questions about the institute or the scholarship.

### ***Assessments:***

#### **6. Dates, locations set for PARCC Test Coordinator training workshops**

The dates and locations for the spring 2016 PARCC Test Coordinator training workshops have been set and details are below. Note that session topics are *testing mode-specific* (i.e., computer-based vs. paper-based testing), which means that participants should sign up for the training workshop that will cover the primary mode of test administration that will take place in their school. For example, if a participant's school is administering paper-based PARCC tests, then she or he should sign up for one of the "Test Coordination for *Paper-Based* Testing" workshops.

In addition to providing information on scheduling and testing times, topics covered at these workshops will include test security, mode-specific test materials, and a heavy focus on "before, during, and after" test administration policies and procedures for PARCC testing. Note that PearsonAccess<sup>next</sup> demonstrations will be provided at the end, so it is recommended that participants bring a laptop or tablet if they wish to follow along during the demonstrations.

*Note:* All Test Coordinator Training workshops are designed for *test coordinators only*, so schools and districts should send only people who are currently serving in a test-coordinator role. As a

reminder, test administrators/teachers are supposed to be trained locally by district- or school-level test coordinators.

Workshops will take place during the weeks of February 22 and February 29. at the Northern Rhode Island Collaborative, North Kingstown Administrative Building, Toll Gate High School Auditorium, and Middletown Oliphant Administrative Building. Doors will open 30 minutes before the start of each session. Details and registration links for each workshop are below:

*Northern Rhode Island Collaborative (Room 104), 640 George Washington Hwy, Lincoln:*

February 23, Morning (8:30-11 a.m.) *Test Coordination for Computer-Based Testing*

<http://www.eride.ri.gov/workshopreg/ViewWorkshop.aspx?workshopid=1415>

February 23, Afternoon (Noon-2:30p.m.) *Test Coordination for Paper-Based Testing*

<http://www.eride.ri.gov/workshopreg/ViewWorkshop.aspx?workshopid=1421>

March 2, Morning (8:30-11 a.m.) *Test Coordination for Computer-Based Testing*

<http://www.eride.ri.gov/workshopreg/ViewWorkshop.aspx?workshopid=1419>

March 2, Afternoon (Noon-2:30 p.m.) *Test Coordination for Computer-Based Testing*

<http://www.eride.ri.gov/workshopreg/ViewWorkshop.aspx?workshopid=1420>



*North Kingstown Administrative Building, 100 Romano Vineyard Way, Suite 120, North Kingstown. Note: Participants must park across the street in the old Lowes parking lot.*

*February 26, Morning (8:30-11 a.m.) Test Coordination for Paper-Based Testing*

<http://www.eride.ri.gov/workshopreg/ViewWorkshop.aspx?workshopid=1422>

*February 26, Afternoon (Noon-2:30 p.m.) Test Coordination for Computer-Based Testing*

<http://www.eride.ri.gov/workshopreg/ViewWorkshop.aspx?workshopid=1423>

*Toll Gate High School Auditorium, 34 Warwick Lake Avenue, Warwick:*

*March 1, Morning (8:30-11:00 a.m.) Test Coordination for Computer –Based Testing*

<http://www.eride.ri.gov/workshopreg/ViewWorkshop.aspx?workshopid=1424>

*March 1, Afternoon (Noon-2:30 p.m.) Test Coordination for Computer-Based Testing*

<http://www.eride.ri.gov/workshopreg/ViewWorkshop.aspx?workshopid=1425>

*Middletown Oliphant Administrative Building, 26 Oliphant Lane, Middletown:*

*March 3, Morning (8:30-11 a.m.) Test Coordination for Paper –Based Testing*

<http://www.eride.ri.gov/workshopreg/ViewWorkshop.aspx?workshopid=1426>

March 3, Afternoon (Noon-2:30 p.m.) *Test Coordination for Computer-Based Testing*

<http://www.eride.ri.gov/workshopreg/ViewWorkshop.aspx?workshopid=1427>

If you have any questions about these workshops, please contact Dr. Kevon Tucker-Seeley (222-8494, [parcc@ride.ri.gov](mailto:parcc@ride.ri.gov)).

## **7. RIDE announces professional-development sessions on PARCC Mathematics expectations**

RIDE will hold professional-development sessions that will provide educators the opportunity to strengthen their understanding of the PARCC Mathematics data that are available to them and also explore the PARCC released items and how these items foster a deeper understanding of the standards.

Open Sessions for Understanding PARCC Mathematics Expectations are scheduled throughout Rhode Island for individual educators or groups of educators from LEAs to attend. They begin next month and continue until the end of March. To help narrow the instructional focus, we will offer two different sessions, one with a focus on elementary grades 3 through 5 and a second with a focus on middle-school grades 6 through 8 plus Algebra I and geometry. The sessions will run from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. or 12:30 to 3:30 p.m.

Details and registration links for each workshop are below:

*Understanding PARCC Mathematics Expectations: Elementary  
Grades 3 through 5*

Warwick Administrative Building (School Committee Room),  
34 Warwick Lake Ave.

February 22, 8:30-11:30 a.m.

[http://www.eride.ri.gov/workshopreg/ViewWorkshop.aspx?  
workshopid=1428](http://www.eride.ri.gov/workshopreg/ViewWorkshop.aspx?workshopid=1428)

Ponaganset Middle School, 7 Rustic Hill Road, North Scituate  
March 3, 12:30-3:30 p.m.

[http://www.eride.ri.gov/workshopreg/ViewWorkshop.aspx?  
workshopid=1430](http://www.eride.ri.gov/workshopreg/ViewWorkshop.aspx?workshopid=1430)

North Kingstown Administrative Building, 100 Romano  
Vineyard Way

March 9, 8:30-11:30 a.m.

[http://www.eride.ri.gov/workshopreg/ViewWorkshop.aspx?  
workshopid=1432](http://www.eride.ri.gov/workshopreg/ViewWorkshop.aspx?workshopid=1432)

Johnston Professional Development Center, 7 Waveland St.  
March 16, 12:30-3:30 p.m.

[http://www.eride.ri.gov/workshopreg/ViewWorkshop.aspx?  
workshopid=1434](http://www.eride.ri.gov/workshopreg/ViewWorkshop.aspx?workshopid=1434)

Middletown Oliphant Administrative Building, 26 Oliphant  
Lane

March 28, 12:30-3:30 p.m.

[http://www.eride.ri.gov/workshopreg/ViewWorkshop.aspx?  
workshopid=1436](http://www.eride.ri.gov/workshopreg/ViewWorkshop.aspx?workshopid=1436)

*Understanding PARCC Mathematics Expectations: Grades 6 to 8,  
Algebra I, and Geometry*

Warwick Administrative Building (School Committee Room),  
34 Warwick Lake Ave.

February 22, 12:30-3:30 p.m.

[http://www.eride.ri.gov/workshopreg/ViewWorkshop.aspx?  
workshopid=1429](http://www.eride.ri.gov/workshopreg/ViewWorkshop.aspx?workshopid=1429)

Ponaganset Middle School, 7 Rustic Hill Road, North Scituate  
March 3, 8:30-11:30 a.m.

[http://www.eride.ri.gov/workshopreg/ViewWorkshop.aspx?  
workshopid=1431](http://www.eride.ri.gov/workshopreg/ViewWorkshop.aspx?workshopid=1431)

North Kingstown Administrative Building, 100 Romano  
Vineyard Way

March 9m 12:30-3:30 p.m.

[http://www.eride.ri.gov/workshopreg/ViewWorkshop.aspx?  
workshopid=1433](http://www.eride.ri.gov/workshopreg/ViewWorkshop.aspx?workshopid=1433)

Johnston Professional Development Center, 7 Waveland St.  
March 16, 8:30-11:30 a.m.

[http://www.eride.ri.gov/workshopreg/ViewWorkshop.aspx?  
workshopid=1435](http://www.eride.ri.gov/workshopreg/ViewWorkshop.aspx?workshopid=1435)

Middletown Oliphant Administrative Building, 26 Oliphant  
Lane

March 28, 8:30-11:30 a.m.

[http://www.eride.ri.gov/workshopreg/ViewWorkshop.aspx?  
workshopid=1437](http://www.eride.ri.gov/workshopreg/ViewWorkshop.aspx?workshopid=1437)

As in the past, if your LEA is interested in hosting a workshop for your educators, District Administrators are encouraged to contact Patricia Carnevale, at [patricia.carnevale@ride.ri.gov](mailto:patricia.carnevale@ride.ri.gov), and begin planning for the session.

## ***Innovation Powered by Technology:***

### **8. RIDE, schools prepare for Digital Learning Day: February 17**

On February 17, thousands of schools and local communities will celebrate the fifth anniversary of [Digital Learning Day](#) and, more important, will take part in the exciting transformation of teaching and learning powered by technology. It may not be the only day during which educators and students go digital, but it will be a day that challenges everyone to be actively involved in reimagining the education system.

Getting there is not just about using digital devices; it is about using them in ways that promote deeper and more engaged student learning. Getting there is also about making sure that all students, not just those fortunate enough to attend the best schools, have access to opportunities for digital learning.

On February 17, celebrate education innovation by sharing how you will reimagine learning in your classroom, program, school, or district. This could involve pairing up less experienced educators with more experienced ones to do a joint digital lesson or trying out new ways of using technology in classrooms. Whatever you do—however small—makes a difference!

RIDE will celebrate and share exciting and innovative ideas throughout the month of February by highlighting best practices and local activities. We will also launch the Future Ready statewide initiative to support personalized learning for district and school leaders working to transform teaching and student learning through the effective use of technology. [Visit the RIDE](#)

[web site](#) or contact [Holly Walsh](#) for more information about Digital Learning Day.

### ***Early Learning:***

#### **9. R.I. to open 20 new Pre-K classrooms; RIDE posts materials, plans sessions to help potential applicants**

This is the year of the largest expansion of the Rhode Island State Pre-Kindergarten Program! Under the Rhode Island Preschool Expansion Grant, RIDE will open an additional 20 classrooms in the fall. To support the many organizations that have expressed interest in the upcoming Request for Proposals to expand the Rhode Island State Pre-Kindergarten Program, RIDE is rolling out some additional resources and information:

*Eligible organizations or entities* include licensed child-care centers, Head Start programs, public schools, and nonpublic schools able to operate a classroom in one of the following eligible communities: Central Falls, Cranston, East Providence, Johnston, Providence, Pawtucket, Newport, North Providence, West Warwick, and Woonsocket.

#### **Anticipated Pre-K RFP Timeline:**

- Pre-K RFP release: on or about February 22
- Pre-K applications due: on or about April 1

*Facilities/space consultation:* If you would like someone to walk through any classroom or playground space you are considering, please contact Carla Swanson, at [Carla.swanson@ride.ri.gov](mailto:Carla.swanson@ride.ri.gov), to set up an informal consultation.

*Comprehensive Early Childhood Education (CECE) Program Regulations/Pre-K Application Overview face-to-face-sessions:* We have scheduled overview sessions to review the CECE approval process and key CECE regulations as they relate to the upcoming Pre-K RFP, as well as a “year in the life” of a state Pre-K grantee. These sessions are open to all potential Pre-K applicants. Interested applicants need attend only one session.

Register for a session by clicking the on the appropriate link below:

[Wednesday \(January 20\) 4 – 6:30 p.m.,at East Bay Educational Collaborative](#)  
[317 Market Street, Warren. Main Training Room](#)

[Thursday \(January 21\) 4 – 6:30 p.m., at the Providence School Department](#)  
[797 Westminster Stree. Development Room, Basement](#)

[January 26, 4 - 6:30 p.m., at Cranston East High School](#)  
[899 Park Ave. Media Center](#)

[January 27, 4 - 6:30 p.m., at Northern Rhode Island Collaborative](#)  
[640 George Washington Hwy, Lincoln. Room 104B](#)

### *Pre-K Application Webinars*

We have scheduled overview webinars for the following dates:

- Monday, February 1, Noon – 1 p.m.
- Friday, February 5, 3:30 – 4:30 p.m.

These webinars will include guidance summarized from previous Pre-K application submissions and will include “do’s and don’ts” as well as additional opportunities for questions and answers. Interested applicants need attend only one webinar. To register, click [here](#)

Additionally, here is the link to the RIDE webpage with information on both state Pre-K and CECE Approval:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/InstructionAssessment/EarlyChildhoodEducation/Programs.aspx>

***Educator Evaluations:***

**10. RIDE to offer webinar Wednesday for new evaluators implementing the Rhode Island Model**

In an effort to provide ongoing and timely support to evaluators, RIDE will host a webinar from 4 to 5 p.m. on **Wednesday** (January 20). During this webinar, we will share strategies for conducting mid-year conferences, review when SLO and SOO revisions are permissible, and highlight key tasks to be completed between now the end of the school year. Participants will have an opportunity to reflect on where they are in the educator-evaluation implementation process and identify some personal next steps. Although the webinar is geared toward new evaluators, experienced evaluators may also benefit from the review and may appreciate the opportunity to share their expertise. Register for the webinar [here](#). If you have questions about this webinar, please e-mail us at [edeval@ride.ri.gov](mailto:edeval@ride.ri.gov).

**11. Educators invited to complete survey, provide input on performance-level descriptors**



All Rhode Island educators are invited to provide feedback through a brief survey on an important aspect of educator evaluation. We recently held several open sessions during which Rhode Island educators came together to discuss and provide feedback, but we hope to reach even more educators through this survey. This survey seeks your feedback on current [Performance Level Descriptors](#), descriptions of what *Highly Effective*, *Effective*, *Developing*, and *Ineffective* practice looks like overall. We will use the feedback from this survey to inform revisions to the descriptors.

The revised PLDs may be used by all teacher-evaluation models and will help ensure that everyone in the state can use common language when talking about what high-quality teaching and learning in Rhode Island looks like. The goal is to clarify expectations for educator performance while respecting differences in RIDE-approved teacher-evaluation systems.

For more information about the Performance Level Descriptor revision process and to take the survey, please visit the [Educator Quality and Certification page](#). If you have questions about this survey, please e-mail us at [edeval@ride.ri.gov](mailto:edeval@ride.ri.gov).

Please submit your responses no later than **February 3**. Thank you for your input!

***Transportation:***

- 12. LEAs asked to submit notification on school closures *unrelated* to weather, road conditions**

In the event that you have a school or district closure that is not related to weather or road conditions, please include the specific reason in your posting on the Rhode Island Broadcasters Network and email the information directly to Nicole Martin, Manager of TransPar, at [Nicole.Martin@ride.ri.gov](mailto:Nicole.Martin@ride.ri.gov). For example, if a school is closed because of a boiler issue, please include that information in your Rhode Island Broadcasters Network posting. Doing so will ensure that transportation under the statewide program is available for:

- resident students attending schools outside of your district; and
- non-resident students attending schools within your district that are not part of the closure announcement.

We will use this information to notify our bus contractors. Our standard inclement weather/emergency closing/delay policy posted on our website remains in place for all other situations.

If you have questions school closures and transportation, please contact [Cynthia.Brown@ride.ri.gov](mailto:Cynthia.Brown@ride.ri.gov) or [Nicole.Martin@ride.ri.gov](mailto:Nicole.Martin@ride.ri.gov).

### **From the U.S. Department of Education**

#### **13. Toolkit developed to connect health, education services**

The U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services have developed a toolkit, “Healthy Students, Promising Futures,” that offers resources and suggests practical steps to take and share to better connect health and education services. Acting Secretary John B. King, Jr., and Health and Human

Services Secretary Sylvia Burwell have sent a letter highlighting the resources in the toolkit:

<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/secletter/160115.html>.

The toolkit is available online, at:

<http://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/healthy-students/index.html>.

### **From other organizations**

#### **14. Scholarships available for students affected by congenital heart defects**

The congenital heart defect community is offering several scholarships in the amount of \$1,000. The scholarships are awarded to qualified high-school and college students who either have been diagnosed with Congenital Heart Defect (CHD), who have been the recipient of a heart transplant, or who have a family member (sibling, child, parent) or close relative diagnosed with CHD.

You can also access the scholarship application and information here:

<http://files.ctctcdn.com/61b0f7f1101/a23bf3c5-5370-480c-b971-b7b9f165f9e2.pdf>

and

<http://files.ctctcdn.com/61b0f7f1101/61cbf8d6-09de-45e3-a4b0-96b3e78db327.pdf> -

**15. FIRST offers tech-challenge applicants opportunity to win robotics kit, free registration**

FIRST is reaching out to educators across the U.S. who have an interest in providing STEM-enrichment programs to their students. Applicants will have the chance to win a free robotics kit and program registration to FIRST Tech Challenge for the 2015-16 and 2016-17 seasons (valued at \$2,000). Winners do not have to compete in the 2015-16 season at an official event. By applying for this grant, grant winners must:

- Register through our Team Information Management System (TIMS) within four weeks of being notified of winning the grant. In order to receive the robot kit, the applicant and one other adult must pass the FIRST Youth Protection Program screening process, which is part of the TIMS registration process, in accordance with standard FIRST guidelines.
- Intend to participate in the 2016-17 FIRST Tech Challenge competition season.
- Agree to do at least one of the following:
  - visit a FIRST Tech Challenge event;
  - make contact with the local FIRST Tech Challenge Affiliate Partner; or
  - connect with another FIRST Tech Challenge team in your area.
- Applicants agree to allow their name and email address to be shared with the donor providing the grant funds.
- Applicants agree to allow their name and photo to be used in FIRST marketing materials and social media posts.

If you have been working with a teacher, school, club, etc., interested in the FIRST Tech Challenge program but that doesn't have the funding to get started, please direct them to the Grant Campaign at: <http://info.firstinspires.org/firsttechchallengegrant> for more information and information on how to apply.

FIRST will announce up to four winners each week until April 15. The earlier you apply, the more chances you have to win!:

<http://info.firstinspires.org/firsttechchallengegrant>

***RIDE will post this field memo on Tuesday, at:***

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/InsideRIDE/FieldMemos.aspx>